

academic careers. The students reported being motivated by the desire for a job that provides flexibility (57%) and stronger job security (51%). More than a third (39%) reported a change in values that encouraged them to pursue a career in a field that is considered “essential.”

While the pandemic may have heightened this competitive environment, it has also led to a sense of loss around the social capital that students hoped to gain in their higher education experience. Because this generation views education primarily as a launchpad for their careers, they are keenly aware of the difference between an in-person college network and the virtual experience that they have had. They are very aware that they have not started building social networks and have missed the valuable interaction with faculty members that often leads to doctoral program placement and other graduate school opportunities. This generation is also savvy enough to understand that if they do not meet new people and form friendships, they are missing part of what they are paying for, particularly with expensive private schools.

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### The need for intentional amenities

In the post-pandemic world, students are more attuned to post-college life and where their studies will lead them. As a result, intentional amenities are even more important than they were a couple of years ago. Housing officers will want to prioritize features and programs that bring educational experiences into living spaces. These might include study rooms, group working areas, presentation spaces, music practice rooms, and the like. These spaces were becoming increasingly important before the pandemic but will be valuable differentiators today.

The desire to maximize the college experience, coupled with the social awareness and unity around causes and movements, could also translate to an increased desire to be in living-learning communities focused on common interests. While it may take some creative thinking, housing officers can identify ways to build these communities while effectively ensuring social distancing as the pandemic lingers.